THE ESSENCE OF EXISTENCE

A PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SEARCH FOR THE MEANING OF LIFE

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Dedication

To every soul who has ever paused in silence, looked inward, and wondered why they exist.

To the seekers, those who are unafraid to question life, to argue with fate, to wrestle with meaning, and to search for truth even in the darkest corners of their hearts.

To those who have loved deeply and lost deeply, who have felt the weight of grief yet still choose love again, knowing the cost but embracing the beauty.

To the curious minds who believe life must be more than survival…
To the broken hearts who need reassurance that love still matters…
To the thinkers who refuse shallow answers…
To the believers who hold on to faith…
And to the skeptics brave enough to doubt.

This book is for you —
for anyone who has ever felt that love is both the question and the answer,
the burden and the blessing,
the reason we stand and the reason we fall.

May these pages bring you closer to understanding yourself, your purpose, your Creator,
and the profound mystery of existence.

Preface

Every human life, at some point, arrives at a quiet question: *Why am I here?* It may come in moments of joy, loss, love, or loneliness, but it always comes. This book was born from that question.

These pages are not meant to offer perfect answers, nor to impose beliefs. They are simply reflections drawn from philosophy, faith, and personal thought on one central truth I have come to believe: **that the essence of existence is love.**

Here, love is not only an emotion, but a force, one that gives meaning to suffering, purpose to living, and direction to the soul. This belief, which I call **Agapism**, is my response to the world's questions, contradictions, and hopes.

This book is for the seeker, the believer, the doubter, and the dreamer. You do not need to agree with every word. You only need to read with an open heart.

If these thoughts lead you to reflect more deeply on your life, your purpose, and your capacity to love, then this book has done what it was meant to do.

Table of Contents

1. The Essence of Life Is Love
2. Philosophical Views on the Meaning of Life
3. The Abrahamic Religions and Love
4. Agapism
5. Love Over Everything
6. Author’s note
7. About Author

The Essence of Existence

Why are we here? What are we here for? What is our purpose in life? Do we just come to life to live and die?.
At some point in life I believe we have asked ourselves these series of questions, if not all some or at least one.

The essence of Existence or life is to love.

To love things as they are, to love people despite their imperfections because nobody is perfect, to love ourselves because self-love is essential, and most especially to love God.

As Muslims say, "We were created by Allah to worship Him and live right." Do I believe that? Absolutely yes, but in a more profound way, you might be wondering how?

As I wrote earlier, "The essence of life is to love," but it's not just about loving, it's also about being loved.

God loves us, and it's only right that we love Him back. How do we do that? Through worship, prayer, and by following His guidance.

Philosophical Views on the Meaning of Life

Many philosophers have searched for the meaning of life. Albert Camus in *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942) said:

"The absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world."
"One must imagine Sisyphus happy."

He proposed that life is absurd, suggesting that while humanity constantly searches for meaning in the universe, the universe remains silent and we should embrace this absurdity.

Friedrich Nietzsche's view of life was nihilism, contrasting with Camus's absurdism.

Nietzsche saw no inherent essence in life, though he urged us to create our own meaning because life itself has no predetermined purpose.

"God is dead. God remains dead and we have killed him." — *The Gay Science* (1882)
"He who has a why to live can bear almost any how." — *Twilight of the Idols* (1888)

Franz Kafka's worldview is often described as *Kafkaesque*, depicting individuals trapped in senseless, incomprehensible, and oppressive systems. He portrays life as absurd and bureaucratically nightmarish, without clear meaning or justice.

"The meaning of life is that it stops." — *The Trial* (1925)

Jean-Paul Sartre declared that "existence precedes essence." Humans are not born with a predefined purpose; we must create our own meaning through our choices.

"Man is condemned to be free; because once thrown into the world, he is responsible for everything he does."
— *Being and Nothingness* (1943)

Sartre's concept of life was existentialism, believing we create meaning through our actions, with each person's essence developing through self-created purpose.

Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle shared similar views about life, that we should seek truth, virtue, and self-knowledge, striving to attain wisdom that aligns with our soul.

This leads us to dive deeper into our research, exploring the three Abrahamic religions to further understand life's meaning.

The Abrahamic Religions and Love

Judaism

In Judaism, love is considered the heart of the Torah, the guiding principle of a righteous and meaningful life.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might."
— *Deuteronomy 6:5*

"The Lord has told you what is good; to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."
— *Micah 6:8*

Christianity

In Christianity, love is not just a virtue it is the very nature of God and the foundation of all truth and purpose.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."
— *Matthew 22:37–39*

"God is love, and whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them."
— *1 John 4:16*

"And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love."
— *1 Corinthians 13:13*

Islam

In Islam, the purpose of life is to know, love, and serve Allah, and this love naturally extends to His creation.

"Those who believe are stronger in love for Allah."
— *Qur'an 2:165*

"Indeed, Allah is Kind and Loving (Al-Wadud)."
— *Qur'an 85:14*

The Qur'an consistently describes God as "*Ar-Rahman, Ar-Rahim*" — The Most Compassionate, The Most Merciful, establishing love and mercy as divine essence.

Agapism

After deep philosophical and theological study, I've found everything converges to one common denominator " love". The philosophy and theology behind life is **Agapism**.

So, how does Agapism respond to the great thinkers who saw a silent, absurd, or empty universe? It answers their call. When Camus tells us to "imagine Sisyphus happy," Agapism provides the reason for that happiness: even in his futile task, Sisyphus can find meaning if he loves the rock, the mountain, or the struggle itself. Love is the ultimate rebellion against the absurd. For Nietzsche, who declared "God is dead" and challenged us to create our own values, Agapism proposes that the most powerful value we can create is love. It is a life-affirming, willful act that gives us a "why" strong enough to bear any "how." It answers Kafka's despair not with a bureaucratic solution, but with a human one: that the meaning of life, while it stops, is found in the profound connections we make. And for Sartre, who said we are

"condemned to be free" to forge our own essence, Agapism is the highest essence we can choose to create through our actions and relationships.

The essence of life is to love; if we all love, then we all will be loved.

The will to live comes from love; as long as we love or have something to love, we have a reason to live.

Grief is the price we pay for love; where there is great love, there will be profound grief.

Love brings us happiness because we find joy in doing what we love and being with those we love.

Love Over Everything

Love over everything and love over anything.

Love supersedes everything. Everything we do connects to loving something or someone. Let's think deeply, why do we do most things? We'll discover it's because of the love we have for them.

Love represents the pinnacle of human experience. I wouldn't call it just a feeling because it's more than that, love is an essence, the essence of our existence. Love is essential. Without love, we cease to be fully human.

As humans, we've accomplished impossible things through love because love can make the impossible possible. Let me explain further, what do we hold dear to our hearts? Family? Friends? Spouse? Children? Ourselves? Or money? Whatever we cherish, love makes it special to us.

I've been asked this question several times, which might confuse others, but I have a clear answer. "Which do you choose, money or love?" The answer is simple: love. As someone who believes love surpasses everything, I recognize money's importance, but do we truly understand love's importance?

Let's examine this further. Different forms of love exist, and I believe they all help stabilize us as humans. First comes self-love. What becomes of a person who doesn't love themselves? Can we truly experience happiness without self-love? A person who doesn't love themselves cannot genuinely love others. Love begins within.

Second is the love we have for our loved ones—family, friends, and romantic partners. These priorities vary individually, but can we truly live without any of them?

Finally, some consider love for God optional, and yes, I'm a firm believer, though I'm not trying to convince anyone, but come to think of it, if you don’t believe in God or the afterlife, doesn’t that imply that we only live here and if we only have one life to live and we should live it in a fulfilling and loving way?

Love is natural and eternal, extending to all living things, unlike money, which is man-made and exclusively human.

We often hear "Money can't buy love" and "Love doesn't cost a dime."

How could money buy love? Love is limitless. Love is infinite. It existed before money was invented, and it wasn't purchased. Love can't be bought; it can only be earned, how can you buy something priceless?

"Love doesn't cost a dime?" In terms of money, yes, but love costs other things, and sometimes love could cost everything. Even as an Agapist, I don't believe in unconditional love. Love shouldn't be unconditional because something so precious shouldn't become a manipulation tool. I don't believe we should love those who don't love us or value our love, and no one should weaponize love or take advantage of people.

Love does cost something. Love has its price. Love is infinite, but love also has boundaries. However you look at it, we exchange love in various ways, through obedience and respecting boundaries, like those our parents set, where breaking them brings consequences, or those our partners establish, where violation could end a relationship.

Love is everything but to understand what love is, we must also recognize what love is not. It is not a form of manipulation, nor is it self-destruction; it is the conscious, courageous choice to connect, and in that connection, to find the very essence of our existence.

Author’s Note

This book was not written to convince the world that I am right, nor to present love as an easy answer to life’s hardest questions. It was written because, like many others, I have struggled with existence, meaning, loss, faith, doubt, and the quiet loneliness that sometimes follows thought. And in all of that, one truth continued to return to me—again and again—that love remains undefeated.

Love does not erase suffering, but it gives it meaning. Love does not remove loss, but it teaches us how to survive it. Love does not silence every question, but it gives us strength to keep asking. In a world that often rewards coldness, speed, and selfish ambition, choosing love can feel like weakness. Yet I have come to learn that love is the greatest courage a human being can possess.

Agapism, as shared in these pages, is not presented as a final doctrine but as a living idea, an invitation to reflect, to challenge, to refine, and to grow. You may agree with parts of it, reject others, or discover your own truth through it. All of that is welcome. Philosophy must breathe. Faith must be sincere. Meaning must be lived.

If this book causes you to treat yourself with more patience, others with more compassion, and God with deeper honesty, then it has succeeded. And if it simply reminds you, in one quiet moment, that love is still worth everything it costs then that is more than enough.

Thank you for reading. Thank you for thinking. And most of all, thank you for choosing to feel in a world that often teaches us not to.

About the Author

Abdullahi Abdulrazaq is an independent philosopher and emerging theologian whose work explores the meaning of existence through the philosophy of love. He is the founder of Agapism—the belief that the essence and purpose of life is love.

He holds a Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree in Computer Science from Al-Qalam University, Katsina, and is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Information Technology at the Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA). His background in technology complements his philosophical interest in human purpose, ethics and divine meaning.